

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4175

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0336

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BU, OVIP

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT TO US OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: SOFIA 0228

1. AMBASSADOR GOTSEV, CHIEF OF MFA FOURTH DEPARTMENT (WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA), TOOK THE OCCASION OF THE RECENT VISIT OF EUR/EE DIRECTOR ANDREWS TO SOFIA TO URGE CONSIDERATION OF A VISIT TO THE US BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BORIS TSVETKOV. GOTSEV HAD, IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON JAN 3, RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTRY VISIT THIS YEAR. ON THIS OCCASION, HE WAS MORE SPECIFIC, NOTING THAT WHILE A VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV WOULD BE GREATLY WELCOMED ON THE PART OF THE BULGARIANS, IT MIGHT BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO PROCEZH AT THIS STAGE WITH A VISIT AT THE DEPUTY LEVEL. THE AMBASSAODR AND ANDREWS AGREED THAT THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

2. TSVETKOV IS ONE OF SIX DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTERS, WITH SUPERVISION INTER ALIA OVER THE FOURTH DEPARTMENT, UN AND DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS, POLICY PLANNING, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, AND LEGAL AFFAIRS. HE IS CERTAINLY THE LOGICAL PERSON, APART FROM MLADENOV HIMSELF, FOR SUCH A VISIT.
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3. THE AMBASSADOR AND ANDREWS ELICITED FROM GOTSEV THE FACT THAT THE BULGARIANS WOULD REGARD ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST AS AN APPROPRIATE HOST FOR SUCH A VISIT (ALTHOUGH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB HAS MORE CLOSELY ANALAGOUS RESPONSIBILITIES).

4. BULGARIAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN QUITE CONSCIOUS OVER THE TWIN DISPARITIES WITH RESPECT TO THEIR MINISTERIAL LEVEL POLITICAL CONTACTS WITH THE US AS CONTRASTED WITH MANY OTHER MAJOR WESTERN COUNTRIES, AND ALSO WITH RESPECT TO AMERICAN LACK OF CONTACTS WITH BULGARIA IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE. THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE THAT MLADENOV WAS THE ONLY EASTERN EUROPEAN FOREIGN MINISTER WHOM SECRETARY VANCE DID NOT SEE LAST FALL. WHILE THE RECENT WARM (OBLIGATORY) RECEPTION OF NEWLY-ARRIVED AMBASSADOR GRIGOROV BY THE PRESIDENT WAS NO DOUBT APPRECIATED, SEVERAL SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE IN THE PAST MENTIONED TO THE AMBASSADOR THE FACT THAT GRIGOROV'S PREDECESSOR, AMBASSADOR POPOV, WAS, DURING HIS SEVERAL YEARS IN WASHINGTON, NEVER AFTER ACCREDITATION RECEIVED BY TWO SUCCESSIVE SECRETARIES OF STATE, EVEN UPON HIS DEPARTURE. IN FACT, THE QUESTION WAS AT ONE POINT EVEN DISCUSSED WITH MLADENOV IN TERMS OF WHETHER HIS ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HERE SHOULD BE CURTAILED IN RECIPROCITY -- ALTHOUGH THE DECISION WAS NOT TO DO SO.

5. THE QUESTION OF A HIGH-LEVEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VISIT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SEPARATELY FROM THE QUESTION OF OTHER HIGH-LEVEL VISITS (SUCH AS THOSE RAISED REFTEL). GOTSEV, FOR EXAMPLE, BRIDLED AT REFERENCES TO THE VISIT ON AN IV GRANT BY CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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SHOPOV LAST YEAR AND PENDING INVITATION UNDER THE SAME AUSPICES TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICIAL STANISHEV (HEAD OF THE FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SECTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE). THESE ARE NOT OFFICIAL VISITS, AND ARE NOT REGARDED AS COMPARABLE OR ALTERNATIVE TO OFFICIAL VISITS. (IN ADDITION, THERE MAY BE SOME RIVALRY BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.)

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT A VISIT THIS YEAR BY TSVETKOV WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AND DESIRABLE. WHILE WE URGE THAT THE SECRETARY RECEIVE MLADENOV WHEN HE ATTENDS THE NEXT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WE DO NOT RECOMMEND INVITING MLADENOV ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT THIS YEAR. AN INVITATION TO TSVETKOV, HOWEVER, WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO GRADUALLY IMPROVING BULGARIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

7. AS TO TIMING, MAY WOULD PROBABLY BE EARLIEST TIME FEASIBLE, WITH SUMMER OR FALL POSSIBLE, DEPENDING ON WASHINGTON CONVENIENCE IN SCHEDULING.

8. TO DATE, WE HAVE MADE NO COMMITMENT EXCEPT TO

CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF TSVETKOV VISIT. EMBASSY
RECOMMENDS SUCH A VISIT, AND WILL APPRECIATE EARLY
FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION. IF, HOWEVER, DECISION MUST
BE DEFERRED, OR NEGATIVE, PLEASE ADVISE.
GARTHOFF

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